

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Office of Emergency Medical Services**

EMS Responsibilities When Responding to Cases of Infectious Disease

Emergency medical services (EMS) providers – ambulance services and their Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) are required to provide care and transportation to any patient who they are called to respond to. This includes those patients who may or do have an infectious or contagious illness.

Ambulance services are required to provide training and equipment to protect their EMTs from infectious or contagious illnesses.

Requirements for infection control protective equipment for each ambulance:

- 1) One infection control kit, containing two (2) each of disposable, fluid-resistant gowns, masks, caps, protective eye gear, and two (2) different sizes of gloves.
- 2) Two (2) respirators, conforming to OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens standard 29 CFR 1910.1030 (HEPA, N95 or better).
- 3) Two (2) disposable "bio-hazard" bags, with ties.
- 4) Personal protective equipment adequate to safeguard the crew from anticipated exposures as defined by the licensee.

The relevant Massachusetts regulations are given below.

105 CMR 170.355: Responsibility to Dispatch, Treat and Transport

(A) No service, or agent thereof, including but not limited to its EMS personnel, shall refuse in the case of an emergency to dispatch an available EMS vehicle, to provide emergency response, assessment and treatment in accordance with the Statewide Treatment Protocols at the scene or during transport, or to transport a patient to an appropriate health care facility within the service's regular operating area, in accordance with the applicable service zone plan.

105 CMR 170.340: Appointment of Designated Infection Control Officer

Each service shall ensure that its EMS personnel are informed of the requirements relating to the reporting of exposures to the infectious diseases set forth in 105 CMR 172.000, and shall appoint one official of the service to act as a designated infection control officer to:

- (A) Receive notifications and responses from health care facilities regarding exposures to infectious diseases dangerous to the public health, as defined in 105 CMR 172.001;
- (B) Report said exposures to EMS personnel; and
- (C) Make requests on behalf of EMS personnel.